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ABSTRACT

Intended as a basis for student discussions on American Indian issues, this article provides background on American Indian and Alaskan Native spiritual values and the white man's disruption of the Sacred Circle of Life. The foundation of the philosophies of North American indigenous peoples was the idea of cyclical reaffirmation and the goal of maintaining a harmonious balance with nature. Traditional Indian activities were conducted with the circle in mind, reflecting the belief that the power of the world and nature worked in circles. Native societies were cooperative and depended on each facet of the environment for sustenance. Plants and animals were accorded equal value with humans, a view that made large scale exploitation impossible. The whiteman broke the Sacred Circle and placed the Indians in "boxes" with restrictions that prevented the traditional life and caused a loss of spiritual power. In this regard, the most serious of the white man's actions was the formation of the reservation system, an alternative to genocide. Land was a spiritual ingredient of Indian cultures; removal to the reservation broke the Indians' ties to sacred ancestral lands and led to spiritual and cultural disintegration. Warfare, disease, alcohol, missionary zeal, the 1887 Allotment Act, and removal of children to government schools contributed to the destruction. Today, Native Americans retain their reverence for the land and seek to strengthen the reservation and village, as the only land base left to them. This article contains many quotes from historical and contemporary Native American leaders, a vocabulary list, and study questions. (SV)

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BREAKING THE SACRED CIRCLE

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BREAKING THE SACRED CIRCLE

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Introductory Note

Breaking the Sacred Circle is being distributed by the Indian Education Office, Multicultural/Equity Education Section, Division of Instructional Programs and Services, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State. The Indian Education Office conducts regular meetings with the Washington State Native American Education Advisory Committee (WSNAEAC) which is composed of Native Americans from reservation and urban areas within Washington State. Three members of WSNAEAC reviewed and edited the content of this document: Ray Mitchell, Edmonds School District; Elaine Grinnell, Port Angeles resident; and Judy Milhofer, Spokane School District. WSNAEAC reviews all documents of this kind prior to publication and discusses them in their regularly scheduled meetings. The three WSNEAC members mentioned above served as a subcommittee to review this publication and report to WSNAEAC and the American Indian community.

This article, written by Dr. Willard Bill, Supervisor of Indian Education within SPI, should be useful to secondary teachers in Washington State. Teachers are encouraged to implement the article into their curriculum, and it is the intent of the Indian Education Office that this document serve as a springboard for student discussion of American Indian issues.

BREAKING THE SACRED CIRCLE

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BREAKING THE SACRED CIRCLE

Introduction

American Indians and Alaskan Natives lived for thousands of years on the North American Continent prior to contact with Europeans. They lived in harmony with themselves, as is evidenced by the lack of protracted warfare and standing armies. They also lived in harmony with nature. The environment of North America was unspoiled when Europeans began to explore the continent in the fifteenth century. To have lived for such a long period of time on the North American Continent, is a testimony to the Indian's ability to maintain a balance between the physical, mental, spiritual, and cultural aspects of life.

The Western idea of linear development and progress was foreign to the American Indian and Alaskan Native. Rather, the idea of cyclical reaffirmation was the foundation for philosophies of the indigenous peoples of North America. Animal and plant kingdoms were treated as equals, and this idea gave such value to life that exploitation, on a large scale as we know it today, was not possible. The goal of the traditional Indian was to strike a harmonious balance with nature and not to attempt to control it.

However, the migration of Europeans to North America distributed the balance of living in the "Sacred Circle of Life" for the American Indian and Alaskan Native. From the time of contact with Columbus in the late fifteenth century, it became increasingly difficult for the indigenous people of North America to live in harmony with the other newly-arrived humans.

The White man, both directly and indirectly, infringed on the cultural and spiritual components of the American Indian and Alaskan Native. Aboriginal spirituality and its concomitant religion were viewed as mere superstition and the culture as the juvenile aspirations of a primitive and backward people. The American Indian-Alaskan Native culture suffered from contact which caused physical and mental suffering. The life span of American Indians and Alaskan Natives has been lower than the national average throughout the twentieth century. Problems of apathy, alcoholism, and other conditions of poverty, have been the result of the imposition of an alien culture on the cultures of North America.

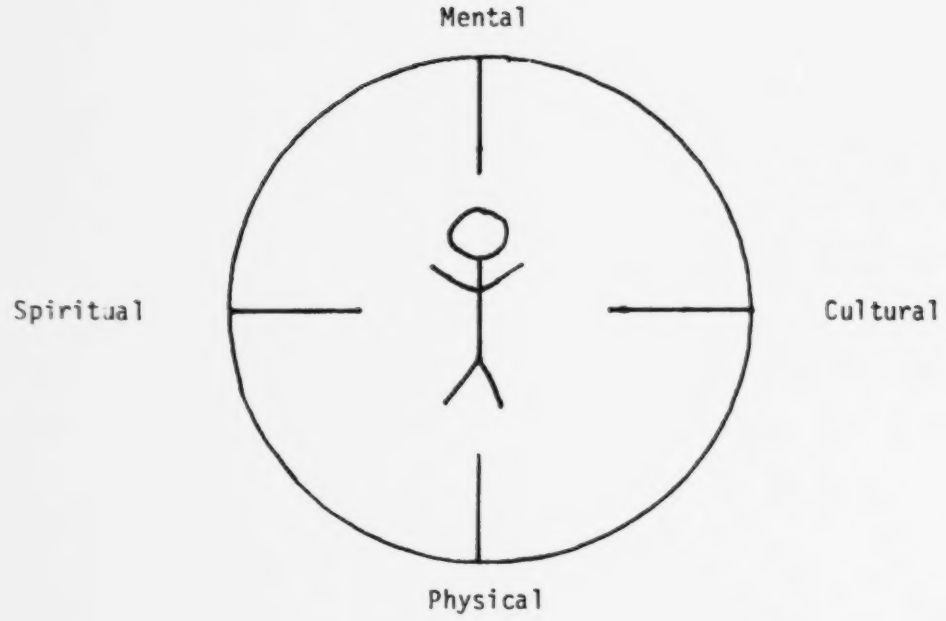
This unit will attempt to establish factors that we must examine to understand the American Indian and Alaskan Native cultures in the latter decades of the twentieth century. Traditional values have doggedly persisted among various tribes and villages in North America; and a number of Indian communities are developing tribal resources, both human and material, to insure self-determination.

But the development of both human and material resources is complicated because the Sacred Circle was broken during the Indian-White contact period. Tribes and villages are continuing to recoil from oppressive policies perpetrated at every level of government from the earliest days of contact. These policies served to break up the continuity of the Indian culture.

Indian culture was attacked during the contact period via military attacks, treaty signing, subjugation, disease, and relocation. Tribal leaders are faced with the problem of repairing the Sacred Circle. How can they do it? This is a question that faces the contemporary political and

spiritual leader of the tribe and village. American Indian-Alaskan Native leaders must make crucial, accurate decisions to maintain their land and mineral resources for succeeding generations of Indian youth. This is a question that must be answered to enable the tribes to function at full strength.

The Sacred Circle



Definition of the Circle

American Indian-Alaskan Native cultures were cooperative societies that depended on each facet of their environment for sustenance. This was reflected in the beliefs of the tribe, band, or village. There was a need to interrelate for survival, and this need was passed on through the centuries. The native person found himself threatened if he were in a situation where he had to function in isolation. This metaphysical-based idea was expressed by a contemporary Indian speaking from Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

> We believe in the sacredness of a circle where everything has its own place, from the lowliest insect to the sun. When I have a brother he is actually part of me because we believe we're part of the same earth and my power goes through that to him, and his to me . . . . You accept all people as being part of you, and you're able to extend that not only to the people but to everything. These things are part of the nature of Indian people and our cultural heritage. We never think that we have to conquer anything. We don't have to build a big dam to divert a river that would eventually end up harming the balance of nature. We don't have to send something to the moon--which is our sister--and take away a part of her flesh and bring it down here for no reason whatsoever. Those things are not be dne and the great circle is not to be tampered with. And the American people are learning that finally.[1]

The preceding statement was made by a contemporary Indian leader explaining a personal view during a confrontation at Wounded Knee, South Dakota. The statement is not too different from proclamations made throughout the contact period by Indian leaders when they explained their views to representatives of different cultures.

Lame Deer clearly details what the traditional concept of the circle was. He notes that the circle is found in nature as well as in the behavior patterns among American Indians.

He states:

> . . . To our way of thinking the Indians' symbol is the circle, the hoop. Nature wants things to be round. The bodies of human beings and animals have no corners. With us the circle stands for the togetherness of people who sit with one another around the campfire, relatives and friends united in peace while the pipe passes from hand to hand. The camp in which every tipi had its place was also a ring. The tipi was a ring in which people sat in a circle and all the families in the village were in turn circles within a larger circle, part of the larger hoop which was the seven campfires of the Sioux, representing one nation. The nation was only a part of the universe, in itself circular and made of the earth, which is round, of the sun, which is round, of the stars, which are round. The moon, the horizon, the rainbow--circles within circles, with no beginning and no end.[2]

The traditional Indian activities were conducted with the circle in mind. It was believed that the power of the world worked in circles. The American Indian was part of a strong culture, and the origin of the strength was working in a circular fashion. Black Elk referred to this as the power originating from the sacred hoop of the nation.[3] As long as the hoop was unbroken the American Indian, as a people, flourished.

Black Elk drew examples of how the earth worked in circles from the environment around him--the roundness of the sky, the earth, and the stars; birds make their nests in circles, which is similar to the way that the

Plains tribes make their tepees; the sun and moon rise and set in a circle; the seasons of the year also make a circle by changing and returning each year to where they had been previously.[4]

Black Elk observed that the Sacred Circle was in fact being broken, and the American Indian was being placed in boxes. They were restricted to such an extent that they could not carry on the traditions that had been established for generations. He believed that this caused a loss in power and led to the death of the Indian people.

The most blatant example of the restrictions was the development of the reservation system, with all the accompanying restrictions on the Indian people. Often many bands or tribes, which may or may not have had anything in common, were banded together on one reservation. The federally-established reservation boundaries did not take into account cultures, economy, or territorial rights. The traditional boundaries of the Indian tribe were well identified and they extended for much greater distances than the artificial reservation boundaries permitted.

The reservation was often located on an abandoned military fort or undesirable land. The government did not take into account the methods of gathering fruit and berries; the hunting ground for deer, elk and other large game; and traditional fishing grounds or water passages for collecting sea life. It certainly did not allow for trading that was a vital part of inter-tribal economy. The ignorance that the United States demonstrated in constructing reservation boundaries was an example of how the Sacred Circle was being broken for the American Indian.

Throughout the nineteenth century the federal government further contributed to breaking the circle by dividing up land and alloting it to individual Indians. The General Allotment Act (24 Sta. 388) was enacted by Congress in 1887. This legislation became known as the Dawes Act, and its

history has been infamous as far as Indians are concerned. It is a classic example of how the American Indian culture was disrupted and fractured in the nineteenth century. Reservation lands were allowed to be parceled out to individual Indians, and citizenship was conveyed to them if they ended the trust status of the lands. In other words, the land was taken out of jurisdiction of the reservation and the Department of the Interior. We should note that citizenship was not granted to American Indians and Alaskan Natives until 1924, and the offer of citizenship provided some incentive to indigenous people.

Indians could also obtain citizenship by moving away from the tribe and adopting the "habits of civilized life."[5] The two ideas--alloting individual parcels of land to Indians and encouraging them to move away from their families--were two critical breaks in the circle. Land had been used by the tribe in a communal way for centuries. The resources within the tribal boundaries were to be shared and used for the benefit of a group. Members of the tribe were often dependent upon other members of their own and of other tribes. Certainly, to live in close proximity to other tribal members was one of the characteristics of the tribal life.

Therefore, Indian leaders throughout North America could see their traditional life style being by-passed by an alien culture that placed high priority on individual ownership of property and living an atomistic life as a self-sustaining individual. This nineteenth century assault on the values of the aboriginal inhabitants was to continue into the twentieth century with modifications of style, but not of substance. The twentieth century Indian had to try to survive--not in the traditional style, but within a culture that valued individual property ownership. Black Elk stated the case quite succinctly.

> Once we were happy in our own country and we were seldom hungry, then the two-leggeds and the four-legged lived together like relatives, and there was plenty for them and for us. But the Wasichus came, and they have made little islands for us and other little islands for the four-leggeds, and always these islands are becoming smaller, for around them surges the gnawing flood of the Wasichu; and it is dirty with lies and greed.[6]

Estimates have varied as to how many Indian "two-leggeds" there were at the time of contact. Dobyns has estimated that there were approximately 9,800,000 Indians in North America at the time of contact. The figures for the New World population were staggering. The same study estimates that there were ninety million Indians at the time of contact with Europeans. This would mean that the population of the western hemisphere was about the same as the population of Europe at the time of contact.[7] Consequently, by the time anyone started counting the Indian population, most had disappeared. Black Elk's observations were all the more urgent in light of the original population.

Chief Luther Standing Bear indicated the extent that breaking the circle hurt the native culture. He stated:

> The man who sat on the ground in his tipi meditating on life and its meaning, accepting the kinship of all creatures and acknowledging unity with the universe of things was infusing into his being the true essence of civilization. And when native man left off this form of development, his humanization was retarded in growth.[8]

The white man had difficulty realizing that the Sacred Circle existed for the aboriginal people. It was beyond the comprehension of the outsider to realize that the Indian had a culture that was founded on a well-thought-out philosophy of life and eternity. The white man, whose roots were in Europe, believed that they were more advanced culturally than the people who had inhabited the North American Continent for thousands of years. When attempts were made to establish Indian/non-Indian relationships, the outsiders did not know how to make their offer in such a way that it would strengthen the native culture.

Tatanga Mani's (Stoney Indian) contrasted the white man's education with the traditional Indian education. It should be noted how the mental activity is linked with nature and religion. He points out how difficult it was for the white man to establish cross-cultural communication.

> Oh, yes I went to the white man's schools. I learned to read from school books, newspapers, and the Bible. But in time I found that these were not enough. Civilized people depend too much on man-made printed pages. I turned to the Great Spirit's book which is the whole of his creation. You can read a big part of that book if you study nature. You know, if you take all your books, lay them out under the sun, and let the snow and rain and insects work on them for a while, there will be nothing left. But the Great Spirit has provided you and me with an opportunity for study in nature's university, the forests, the rivers, the mountains, and the animals which include us.[9]

The American Indian and Alaskan Native perceived the world as intimately linked to, and a product of, the physical environment. To understand the Indians' world one must understand the environment, because most Indian people did not live in houses that separated the individual from the environment. Not because they had no choice. Indians of the Pacific Northwest, for example, made their houses out of cedar and many of these longhouses were larger than contemporary homes, some being inhabited by many families. Rather, the native people lived in the elements to such an extent that they did not need total shelter to protect their bodies. The hunters or fishermen had to live outdoors for extended periods of time; consequently, the tougher they could be, the more comfortable they would be during those periods of time when their skills of hunting or fishing were called into play.

The aboriginal person identified with the environment in a very personal way. Lame Deer states:

> A human being, too, is many things. Whatever makes up the air, the earth, the herbs, the stones is also part of our bodies. We must learn to be different, to feel and taste the manifold things that are us.[10]

American Indians (similar to Lame Deer) spoke of their personal frustrations as they attempted to reconcile the differences in their philosophies and those of the white man. One of the most eloquent spokesmen was Chief Sealth--principal chief of six tribes in the Pacific Northwest. Today the City of Seattle bears his name, and he is remembered for the speech he made in 1855 that indicates the importance of the physical environment to the Indian.

> Your religion was written on tablets of stone, by the iron finger of your God, lest you forget it. The red men could never remember it or comprehend it. Our religion is the tradition of our ancestors, the dreams of our old men, given them by the Great Spirit, and the visions of our sachems and is written in the hearts of our people . . . . Every part of this country is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove has been hallowed by some fond memory or some sad experience of my tribe. Even the rocks which seem to lie dumb as they swelter in the sun . . . thrill with memories of past events connected with the fate of my people.[11]

Contemporary Indian leaders state their case in a similar way to that mentioned by Chief Sealth over a hundred and twenty-five years ago. In a Washington State task force report during the 1970's, an Indian leader expressed it this way:

> The Indians think of themselves as participating with nature in the cycle of life. They hold for nature a respect and reverence that is spiritual. To the Indian land is sacred. To attempt to subdue or subvert the natural world is to him sacrilege. He understands the vital interdependence between man and his natural environment.[12]

The passage from this hearing conducted in Washington State points out how the contemporary Indian regards the physical world and the spiritual world as integrally linked. This idea has remained unchanged throughout the years. Indian leaders who were in the forefront of the contact between

tribes and non-Indians, made similar statements regarding the land, water, air, and other resources that the Indian could not perceive owning or selling. Throughout the contemporary period, Indians and Alaskan Natives have made similar proclamations. In the Washington task force report, a Western Washington Indian leader expressed this idea regarding land:

> To the Indian, land was not simply a plot of clay to occupy, to build a house or barn or city or ranch on, or to sell for cash. Land was owned communally and could not be sold by an individual Indian. It was not "developed" for commercial use, but kept in its natural state and appreciated, even worshipped. According to the oral tradition of the Western Washington Quileutes, the trees talked to the Indians. The ocean, the birds, the rocks and the mountains communed with the Indians and passed on to the red man the secret wisdom of nature.[13]

A contemporary Indian writer, Vine Deloria, noted this feeling of reverence for the land in his book God is Red. He noted that life and death and resurrection linked the Native American to the cyclical rhythm of nature and the physical world:

> But in the Indian the spirit of the land is still vested; it will be until other men are able to divine and meet its rhythm. Men must be born and reborn to belong. Their bodies must be formed of the dust of their forefather's bones.[14]

Intrusion

American Indians and Alaskan Natives have been consistently faced with intrusion into their territories since earliest contact in the fifteenth century. For some tribes of Indians and villages of Alaska, the intrusion came at a later time than for the Indians of the East Coast and the Southeast, but the intrusion did occur for all native groups of North America. The Alaskan Natives were to feel the full impact of intrusion on their land during the 1960's and the 1970's. Up to that time they had something of a buffer from outside groups (except for the Russians) competing for their resources.

At the time of contact, natural resources of North America were pretty much as they had been for thousands of years--not only in the North American Continent, but in other areas as well. Jacobs has stated that, "In the Pacific Islands, in Australia, and in North America, although patterns of life varied, native cultures seem to have put little strain on the land and biota."[15] Thus, even into the latter quarter of the twentieth century, timber, water and minerals were in much the same condition as the Indians and Alaskan Natives had found them.

Many early contacts regarding competition for resources were marked by violence. Yes, there was a hospitality by numerous Indian groups to the initial settlers; but as the movement arose for acquisition of Indian lands, there were violent outbreaks between the Indian and non-Indian factions. History has recorded the long string of wars, battles, and violence that occurred with the movement of peoples into the New World from the East Coast and from the southern part of what is now the United States.

Throughout the nineteenth century, the Indians were confronted by the federal government and moved to reservations. Boundaries were drawn and the Indians, often from tribes which had nothing in common, were moved to one geographical location. This was a technique for destroying the native. Jacobs indicated this when he wrote, "Next to outright extermination, the best technique for destroying natives was dispossessing them from their land. Land for the aborigines was all important because it was a spiritual ingredient of their culture; it determined their social groupings and status; and, finally, it was the source of their livelihood."[16]. Conflict over the land and resources continued from the very beginning of the contact period between the Indians and non-Indians. Speckled Snake Creek spoke of the intrusion into Indian lands and how this contact led to conquest of the Indian and acquisition of the land.

> Brothers! I have listened to many talks from our great father. When he first came over the wide waters, he was but a little man . . . very little. His legs were cramped by sitting long in his big boat, and he begged for a little land to light his fire on . . . . But when the white man had warmed himself before the Indians' fire and filled himself with their hominy, he became very large. With a step he bestrode the mountains, and his feet covered the plains and the valleys. His hand grasped the eastern and the western sea, and his head rested on the moon. Then he became our Great Father. He loved his red children, and he said, "Get a little further, lest a I tread on thee . . . ."[17]

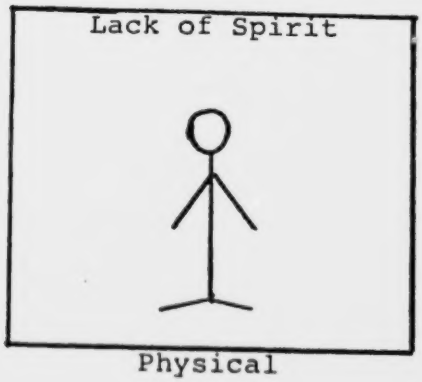
The idea of "getting a little further" was a consistent theme throughout the contact period when Indians and non-Indians were negotiating for various parts of the North American continent.

Intrusion led to acquisition, and then to cultural and physical damage or genocide of the native population. Acquisition, because it is materialistic in nature, has no upper limits. Thus the drive for acquisition has never ceased with the passing of time. Tecumseh noted this in 1812:

> Every year our white intruders become more greedy, exacting, oppressive, and overbearing . . . . Wants and oppressions are our lot . . . . Are we not being stripped day by day of the little that remains of our ancient liberty? . . . . Unless every tribe unanimously combines to give a check to the ambitious avarice of the whites, they will soon conquer us apart and disunited, and we will be driven away from our native country and scattered as autumnal leaves before the wind.[18]

As the white man began to break the Sacred Circle of the Indian, he was attempting to place the Indian culture into a square shape. The Indian perceived that the white man lived in a square box with the sides of the box being material and physical--the spiritual component lacking. In the square life it is impossible to break life into recognizable components; however, with a circle, the line is flowing and continuous.

Physical



Crazy Horse made the following statement regarding the intrusion of the white man into tribal territory and the imposition of alien values on the Indian culture:

> We did not ask you white men to come here. The Great Spirit gave us this country as a home. You had yours. We did not interfere with you. The Great Spirit gave us plenty of land to live on, and buffalo, deer, antelope and other game. But you have come here; you are taking my land front; you are killing off our game, so it is hard for us to live. Now, you tell us to work for a living, but the Great Spirit did not make us to work, but to live by hunting. You white men can work if you want to. We do not interfere with you, and again you say, why do you not become civilized? We do not want your civilization! We would live as our fathers did, and their fathers before them.[19]

It was difficult for Europeans (immigrating from what they believed to be an advanced country) to realize that the native population was unimpressed with Europeans.

On the other hand, the non-Indian politicians were unimpressed by the culture of the American Indians. Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, considered the Indians to be members of an inferior society and to be standing in the way of westward expansion of the United States. He considered the western section of the continent a frontier that needed to be settled by non-Indians. He made his views known in a very brutal way when he stated, "This great continent could not have been kept as nothing but a game reserve for squalid savages."[20]

The open frontier concept was an idea that had been developed in an essay written by Turner in 1893. Turner regarded the Indian as an "obstacle" that was in the way of westward expansion. This view held that the white man needed to move west to settle the land, and turn it into productive uses. Even though the American Indian had lived on the land for thousands of years, the land was considered frontier by the Turner thesis. This thesis did not take into account that the land had been explored, charted and mapped by the tribes. Indian nations had set territorial boundaries in accordance with nature's valleys, streams, rivers, mountains, and hunting areas.

Tribes knew exactly where they could travel and hunt without intruding on other tribes' territories. Markers made in stone identified trails, watering holes, and other information vital to the Indians. Tribes typically had permanent homes and traveled for trading or hunting, using signposts that had been made by tracking experts. The frontier, as perceived by the white man, did not exist. The land had been explored and settled for hundreds of years.

Spiritual Confusion

This unit has dealt with the spiritual meaning of the Sacred Circle, and its significance to the American Indian and the Alaskan Native. From the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, as materialistic elements broke the circle, Indian culture was battered and bruised; and, in some cases, Indian cultures disintegrated. Tribes were relocated, moved to crowded reservations, removed from traditional hunting and fishing grounds, sent to government schools, removed from their homes at an early age, and made wards of the federal government. This impacted the Indian culture at all levels, including the spiritual aspect of the culture.

A spiritual alternative was offered to Indians and Alaskan Natives. Missionaries exposed the Indian to a wide variety of interpretations of what it meant to be a Christian: Jesuits entered the country from the north and expressed their particular view on eternal life; the Franciscans entered from the southern part of the continent and led the way to a greater awareness of their belief; Protestants joined in the converting chorus, and established missions in the West. A myriad of religious convictions was taken in by aboriginal people of the New World, and they attempted to relate and apply these religions to their culture.

How was the Indian able to tell the road to salvation? The missionaries brought with them a multitude of values which often threw the Indian out of balance with his environment. This was a break in the Sacred Circle. The Indian was not only bombarded with white men who were Jesuits, Protestants, Franciscans; but they also met white men who were not

Christian, but engaged in various unlawful methods of entrepreneurship and exhibited behavior different from the missionaries. Added to this were the contacts with the United States military in peace and in war. Quite a mixture of beliefs for the native person to encounter and try to understand!

Usually the Indian did not try to convert the white man, but listened patiently as the missionaries talked to them. Perhaps if the missionaries were allowed to work in isolation, history might have been different in the United States. But the missionary was only one element of the intrusion. Along with the missionary came the other elements of contact. Deloria states:

> Sacrifices often matched mistakes. Missionaries did more to open up the West than any other group, but in doing so they increased the possibility of exploitation of the people they purported to save. Land acquisition and missionary work always went hand in hand in American history,
>
> While the thrust of Christian missions was to save the individual Indian, its result was to shatter Indian communities. Tribes that resisted the overtures of the missionaries seemed to survive. Tribes that converted were never heard of again. Where Christianity failed, and insofar as it failed, Indians were able to withstand the cultural deluge that threatened to engulf them.[22]

These were the days before reading was common for people in general, let alone the people of North America--whose culture was built upon oral transmission of vital cultural elements. The missionaries based their beliefs on a written book, the Bible, and had to relay its message to the Indian people via the English language. So, the Indian was the receiver of a revelation through a language he did not speak and in a book he did not and could not read.

> These men (the missionaries) know we do not understand their religion. We cannot read their book--they tell us different stories about what it contains, and we believe they make the book talk to suit themselves. If we had no money, no land, and no country to be cheated out of, these black coats would not trouble themselves about our good hereafter.[23]

The Indian was becoming suspicious of the missionaries, who could be termed the counterparts to persons held in the highest regard in Indian culture--the spiritual leaders. They saw white people exhibit behavior that did not correlate with beliefs expressed in the Good Book:

> . . . The black coats tell us to work and raise corn; they do nothing themselves and would starve to death if someone did not feed them. All they do is to pray to the Great Spirit; but that will not make corn and potatoes grow; if it will why do they beg from us and from the white people.[24]

Acquisition

A study of the history of Indian-white contact might lead to the hypothesis that if the Indian tribes had taken "this or that" action, the history of Indian retention of land and other resources might have been different. A sympathetic examination of the facts might lead to the belief that if a particular tribe had taken a certain course of action, its contacts with white people would have been different--or at least different from tribes in other parts of North America. However, Helen Hunt Jackson, a nineteenth century writer, made the following observation regarding the treatment of the tribes; the futility of the struggle against non-Indians; and the fact that, no matter what the Indians did, they were exploited:

> It makes little difference where one opens the record of the history of the Indian; every page and every year has its dark stain.
>
> The story of one tribe is the story of all, varied only by differences of time and place, but neither time nor place makes any difference in the main facts. Colorado is as greedy and unjust in 1880.as was Georgia in 1830, and Ohio in 1795; and the United States Government breaks promises now as deftly as then, and with an added ingenuity from long practice.[25]

Helen Hunt Jackson examined the contact period and had come away appalled at the manner in which non-Indians were acquiring property that belonged to the Indians. This acquisition process included the formal process of treaty negotiation and methods of wringing concessions from the Indian people--a demand which seemed incongruous to the Indian, as the following passage indicates:

> Brothers: You have talked to us about concessions. It appears strange that you expect any from us, who have only been defending our just rights against your invasions. We want peace. Restore us to our country, and we shall be enemies no longer. . . .[26]

This plea for the restoration of the country was supplemented by less-ambitious requests for at least enough land to live on:

> We desire you to consider that our only demand is the peaceable possession of a small part of our once great country. Look back and view the lands from whence we have been driven to this spot. We can retreat no farther, because the country behind hardly affords the food for its present inhabitants; and we have therefore resolved to leave our bones in this small space, to which we are now consigned.[27]

The Indian experienced a feeling of emptiness as a result of the exploitation and greed which accompanied the acquisition of land and resources by the white man. Even though they acquired more and more, it did not satisfy them. Lame Deer sums up this idea when he talks of the "frog skin" world of the white man, where people and objects are treated impersonally:

> The Sioux have a name for white men. They call them wasicun--fat takers. It is a good name, because you have taken the fat of the land. But it does not seem to have agreed with you. Right now you don't look so healthy--overweight, yes, but not healthy. Americans are bred like stuffed geese--to be consumers, not human beings. The moment they stop consuming and buying, this frog-skin world has no more use for them. They have become frogs themselves. Some cruel child has stuffed a cigar into their mouths and they have to keep puffing and puffing until they explode. Fat-taking is a bad thing, even for the taker. It is especially bad for Indians who are forced to live in this frog-skin world which they did not make and for which they have no use.[28]

In acquiring the land of the American Indian and Alaskan Native, the white man destroyed the balance, in many parts of North America, between the Native American and nature. Sacred or special places that Indians had used for centuries were destroyed in the process of "developing" the land. Logging companies have been particularly destructive to spawning beds for fish. The logging companies have used heavy machinery to move and extract logs from the woods. After logs are dragged through the spawning beds,

disturbing the bottom of the stream or river, the female salmon will not lay their eggs in that location. Hence, an important natural resource is lost to the Indian. Indians of the Pacific Northwest attached a spiritual significance to the salmon and its cyclical life. When the spawning bed is destroyed the fish run is endangered, and the Indians not only lose an important food supply, but also a part of their spiritual heritage.

The non-Indian developer did not have a reverence for the land. In fact, the thrust of western civilization has been the conquest and mastery of nature as an adversary or stern competitor, not a friend or spiritual companion. In the followig passage an old Wintu woman from California talks about the destruction of the land in which her tribe lived. Gold mining and hydraulic mining destroyed much of Mother Nature's earth that was her homeland.

> The white people never cared for land or deer or bear. When we Indians kill meat, we eat it all up. When we dig roots we make little holes. . . . We don't chop down the trees. We use only dead wood. But the white people plow up the ground, pull down the trees, kill everything. The tree says, "Don't, I am sore. Don't hurt me." but they chop it down and cut it up. The spirit of the land hates them. They blast our trees and stir it up to its depths. They saw up the trees. That hurts them.

The Indians never hurt anything, but the White people destroy it all. They blast rocks and scatter them on the ground. The rock says, "Don't. You are hurting me." But the white people pay no attention. When the Indians use rocks,they take little round ones for their cooking. . . . How can the spirit of the earth like the White man?. . . Every where the white man has touched it, it is sore.

Justification

Before plunging into a white man's history of the American Indian and Alaskan native, we should learn what part of history is important for the Native American. Chronology; legalisms such as treaties, rights, laws, and constitutions; progress, and invention are the province of a western history centering around the Darwinian myth of the superiority of the white race. In another context, racism has been described as "the conscious or unconscious belief in the basic superiority of individuals of European ancestry, which entitles white people to a position of dominance and privilege."[30] This is the idea that promoted and made possible the exploitation of American Indians.

The American Indian and Alaskan Natives' view of history, on the other hand, is concerned with man's cyclical or circular communion with nature. Man is not superior to, but a part of, nature. A person wishing to gain an understanding of Native American history must first witness it through the eyes of American Indians and Alaskan Natives to see how they perceive history as an internal interplay of the past, present, and future.

We need to consider how Western history and its interpretations have shaped the historical direction and course of the American Indian and Alaskan native. In a way, we must free our minds from Western historical conceptions and values; then suspend it in a spiritual and mystical space, and enter the mind and world of the American Indian. After all, history is, in essence, a story that has an arbitrary beginning, so why must a story be told in only one way? It is well to learn the stories of other peoples to understand the simple truths of mankind.

Dissolution

The American Indian Movement (AIM) became highly visible during the mid-1960's. American Indians gained international and national attention during their takeover of Wounded Knee, South Dakota in 1973. The following passage from a speech by one of the AIM leaders after the Wounded Knee seige of February/March 1973, captures the Native American attitude about the dissolution of their people:

> We're concerned with having our people free to live on their land and not have a constant pressure from the U.S. Government to move them off it. We see this as the Government's main aim in Indian relations--to finally take all our land and have Indian people become homogenized into American society and not have any identity of their own.
>
> That is our greatest danger, and that is the real genocide against our people. They kill off the dissident ones--what they used to call "hostile" ones, now the "militant" ones--get rid of them physically. And then they get rid of the rest of our people by trying to get them to become brown white people.[30]

This statement reflects the fear of the American Indian and Alaskan Native from the beginning of the contact period. They understood that they were in the way of an aggressor who could either eliminate them or coerce them into a lifestyle damaging to their culture. Teaching importance of land was critical to cultural understanding. The land was sacred. Chief Plenty-Coups stated "the ground on which we stand is sacred ground. It is

the dust and blood of our ancestors. On these plains the Great White Father at Washington sent his soldiers armed with long knives and rifles to slay the Indian. . .".[31] Therefore, retaining the land and its resources was an important deterrent to genocide.

It required all the ingenuity that the American Indian had to retain land that had been theirs for generations. Indians did not become citizens until 1924; therefore, they did not have the usual legal recourse that other American citizens had. Indians had to rely on the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to protect their welfare. The BIA had been charged with the trusteeship responsibility when treaties were signed between tribes and the United States. To the extent that the BIA acted responsibly (and, in fact, protected the land), land was retained by Indians. As regards the history of the BIA, let it suffice to say that after the passage of the General Allotment Act of 1887, Indians lost 90 million acres of land.

Plenty Coup spoke regarding the loss of land in 1909 in his farewell address at the Little Bighorn Council grounds:

> A few more passing suns will see us here no more, and our dust and bones will mingle with these same prairies. I see as in a vision the dying spark of our council fires, the ashes cold and white. I see no longer the curling smoke rising from our lodge poles. I hear no longer the songs of the women as they prepare the meal. The antelope have gone; the buffalo wallos are empty. Only the wail of the coyote is heard. The white man's medicine is stronger than ours; his iron horse rushes over the buffalo trail. He talks to us through his "whispering spirit" (the telephone). We are like birds with a broken wing. My heart is cold within me. My eyes are dim--I am old. . . .[32]

As Indian people were driven westward, they were taken from the land which was their sole means of survival. This was a critical loss to the elders who could reflect on times when the country belonged to them and their ancestors. Each part of their environment had memories dear to them. How could these memories, dreams and other parts of their culture be sold? It was not a concept that had relevance to the American Indian. Standing Bear of the Poncas made this statement after being driven from the original place of habitation:

> You have driven me from the East to this place, and I have been here two thousand years or more. . . . My friends, if you took me away from this land it would be very hard for me. I wish to die in this land. I wish to be an old man here. . . . I have not wished to give even a part of it to the Great Father. Though he were to give me a million dollars I would not give him this land. . . . When people want to slaughter cattle they drive them along until they get them to a coral, and then they slaughter them. So it was with us. . . . My children have been exterminated; my brother has been killed.[33]

Indians on the East Coast and the Plains had been beaten back and displaced by military encounters. Other tribes had been moved under authority of the president. For example, the Cherokee and others were moved via the "Trail of Tears" from their homeland to Oklahoma. Many Indians fell victim to debilitating diseases that ravished their numbers.

But another enemy of the Indian people was introduced to them--and it was to have dire consequences on the people with the passing of time. Red Jacket makes mention of it and the damage it caused among the Iroquois-Seneca. Sago-yo-watha (Red Jacket) stated:

> The white people had now found our country. Tidings were carried back and more came amongst us. Yet, we did not fear them. We took them to be friends. They called us brothers. We believed them and gave them a larger seat. At length, their numbers had greatly increased. They wanted more land; they wanted our country. Our eyes were opened and our minds became uneasy. Wars took place. Indians were hired to fight against Indians and many of our people were destroyed. They also brought strong liquor amongst us. It was strong and powerful and has slain thousands.[34]

When liquor was added to military confrontations, disease, treaty-making, and outright theft, American Indians suffered another setback. The onslaught seemed never-ending; because, whereas the Indian had a limited population and could ill-afford to lose people, the white man seemed to have unlimited manpower. Red Cloud noted this when he talked of the numbers of white men that they had to face.

> The white men are like locusts when they fly so thick that the whole sky is like a snowstorm. You may kill one, two, ten; yes as many as the leaves in the forest yonder, and their brothers will not miss them. Count your fingers all day long and

white men with guns in their hands will come faster than you can count. You are fools, you die like rabbits when the hungry wolves hunt them in the hard moon.

I am no coward. I shall die with you.[35]

Dissolution occurred in the wake of the white man's sweep across the United States. The white man believed that Indians were in the way of progress and should either be exterminated or removed to reservations, which was an afterthought developed when the white man found it too difficult and embarrassing to rid the United States of all Native Americans. Thus, in the drive to acquire their lands, dissolution of Native Americans was, at first, considered the most efficient method.

The destruction of American Indian people took two forms: cultural and physical. If the westward moveent destroyed Native American cultures, the dominant society would not have to worry about American Indian cultures or be challenged by them. If culture were destroyed through missionary zeal and assimilation, then the other elements of the Sacred Circle--mental outlooks, spiritual feelings, and physical well-being--would change or evanesce. As for the physical form of waste, relentless warfare, massacres and alcohol destroyed many Native Americans physically. Even whole tribes disappeared. Tecumseh asked these questions:

Where today are the Pequot? Where are the Narragansett, the Mohican, the Pokanoket, and many other once powerful tribes of our people? They have vanished before the avarice and the oppression of the White Man, as snow before a summer sun.

Will we let ourselves be destroyed in our turn without a struggle, give up our homes, our country bequeathed to us by the Great Spirit, the graves of our dead, and everything that is dear and sacred to us? I know you will cry with me, "Never! Never!"[36]

Exclusion

A central concern is not the history of the reservation, but rather Native American attitudes toward them. After all, Indians were initially confined to them, giving up most of their land to the white man in exchange for a chimera or a mirage of security. For example, when the white man discovered gold on Nez Perce land, he moved them to another reservation with much poorer land which was not their own. Thus, reservations became an alternative to genocide in that the Indian was removed or excluded from the development of the United States. The white man made sure the Indian had poor land and was subservient to white bureaucrats, particularly in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Native Americans--the Cherokee, Chocktaw, and Cree--were moved like cattle to distant, unfamiliar lands to make way for white settlers. If the white man did not kill all the Native Americans, he at least made sure that they would not reap any of the benefits of white society.

In conclusion, the formation of reservations contributed more than other atrocities to the breaking of the Sacred Circle. Take away the sacred land--the home of his ancestors--and you help to destroy the Indian's culture (integrally tied to the land), and weaken his spiritual, physical, and mental well-being.

They took the whole Sioux Nation
And put us on this reservation
They took away our way of life
The tomahawk, the bow and knife
They put our papoose in a crib
And they took the buckskin from our rib
They took away our native tongue

And talk their English to our young
The old teepee we all love so
They're using now for just a show
And all our beads we made by hand
And nowadays are made in Japan
Although they've changed our ways of old
They'll never change our hearts and souls
Though I wear a man's shirt and tie
I'm still a red man deep inside.[37]

Most Native Americans did not understand the white man's conception of exclusive, private property. Thus, when Native Americans entered into treaty agreements with the United States government, they did not realize that they were expected to give up much of their freedom to wander freely about their ancestral sacred lands. Native Americans viewed land as a gift from the Great Spirit to be held in common by the people and not to sell or relinquish. In reality, Indians were confined to reduced parts of their former lands and excluded from most of the land in which they used to freely travel. The use of the term "reservation" is a "double-think" word used in the nineteenth century to denote freedom and protection from white society; while it actually meant imprisonment and encroachment, resulting in a policy of apartheid. Black Hawk stated:

> . . . What right had these people (the whites) to our village and our fields, which the Great Spirit had given us to live upon? My reason teaches me that land cannot be sold. The Great Spirit gave it to his children to live upon and cultivate as far as

necessary for their subsistence, and so long as they occupy and cultivate it they have the right to the soil, but if they voluntarily leave it, then any other people have a right to settle on it. Nothing can be sold but such things as can be carried away.[38]

Class divisions, which cut across cultures, began to emerge with the exploitation of the American Indian. White people as well as Indians were exploited. Not only did the white man exclude the Indians or force them onto reservations; but, in his rapacity for land, he shut out other white men from land which he grabbed. Thus, the successful white men excluded many poor white people from a decent life.

There was no room for communal feeling in the drive for acquisitions. Sitting Bull spoke of this factor of exclusion this way:

Yet, hear me, people, we have now to deal with another face--small and feeble when our fathers first met them but now great and overbearing. Strangely enough they have a mind to till the soil and the love of possession is a disease with them. These people have made many rules that the rich may break but the poor may not. They take tithes from the poor and weak to support the rich who rule. They claim this mother of ours, the earth, for their own and fence their neighbors away; they deface her with their building and their refuse. That nation is like a spring freshet that overruns its banks and destroys all who are in its

path. We cannot dwell side by side. Only seven years ago we made a treaty by which we were assured that the buffalo country should be left to us forever. Now they threaten to take that away from us. My brothers, shall we submit or shall we say to them: "First kill me before you take possession of my Fatherland". . . .[39]

Currently the Indian communities of the United States and the Alaskan Native villages are attempting to strengthen the reservation and the village, since the reservation is the land base which the tribes are developing for the benefits of succeeding generations. A wide variety of economic development plans are in various stages of implementation for the benefit of the Indian and Alaskan Native cultures. However, during the nineteenth century when the reservation system was being forced on Indian culture, there was great reluctance to make this change. Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce, expressed his ideas on this transition in the following passage:

If the white man wants to live in peace with the Indian he can live in peace. There need be no trouble. Treat all men alike. Give them all the same law. Give them all an even chance to live and grow. . . . You might as well expect the rivers to run backward as that any man who was born free should be contented penned up and denied liberty to go where he pleases. If you tie a horse to a stake, do you expect he will grow fat? If you pen an Indian up on a small plot of earth and compel him to stay there, he will not be contented nor will he grow and prosper.

I have asked some of the Great White Chiefs where they get their authority to say to the Indian that he will stay in one place, while he sees white men going where they please. They cannot tell me.

I only ask of the government to be treated as all other men are treated. If I cannot go to my own home, let me have a home in a country where my people will not die so fast.[40]

Lack of Harmony

The idea expressed by Chief Joseph has been expressed in a contemporary setting by Indian leaders. It became evident to Indian leaders that the development of their resources would have to start with what they had. That is, they had to begin with their current land base, imperfect as it was. However, this was still a frustrating task for the Indian because the white man had modified and changed the physical environment of the Indian--throwing him out of harmony with nature and hampering effective use of Indian land and resources. The following is an excerpt from a "Declaration of Indian Purpose," formulated by a tribal convention which met in Chicago in June 1961:

> The conditions in which Indians live today reflect a world in which every basic aspect of life has been transformed. Even the physical world is no longer the controlling factor in determining where and under what conditions men may live. In region after region, Indian groups found their means of existence either totally destroyed or materially modified. Newly introduced diseases swept away or reduced populations. These changes were followed by major shifts in the internal life of tribe and family.[41]

As was mentioned earlier, a legal precedent for dispossessing the Indian was the 1887 Allotment Act, which changed the way of life of the Indian. Even though the Indian had lost much of his land and resources during the nineteenth century, he continued to hold a considerable amount of resources in North America. In the following passage Deloria provides a penetrating and concise analysis of the meaning and "use" of the Allotment Act which is better known as the Dawes Act.

> . . . The basic idea of the Allotment Act was to make the Indian conform to the social and economic structure of rural America by vesting him with private property. If, it was thought, the Indian had his own piece of land, he would forsake his tribal ways and become just like the white homesteaders who were then flooding the unsettled areas of the western United States. Implicit in the ideology behind the law was the idea of the basic sameness of humanity. . . .[42]

Publicity surrounding the legislation made it appear to the public that it would be beneficial to the Indian. After all, who--in nineteenth century rural America--could argue against owning and tilling land, raising heifers, and becoming a citizen? These were concepts held dear by the immigrant to the new "country of opportunity." They argued that the Indian was not a citizen, so it was in his best interest to acquire land to facilitate the citizenship process. This idea seems, on face value, to have merit; but it was not in the Indian's best interest, as Deloria makes clear.

But there was more behind the act than the simple desire to help the individual Indian. White settlers had been clamoring for Indian land. The Indian tribes controlled nearly 135 million acres. If, the argument went, that land were divided on a per capita basis of 160 acres per Indian, the Indians would have sufficient land to farm and the surplus would be available to white settlement.[43]

So the Allotment Act was passed and the Indians were allowed to sell their land after a period of twenty-five years during which they were to acquire the management skills to handle the land. However, nothing was done to encourage them to acquire these skills and consequently much land was immediately leased to non-Indians who swarmed into the former reservation areas.

It has been a usual pattern, when dealing with American Indians and Alaskan Natives, to pass laws for the "benefit" of Indians and it has continued from the time of contact with Europeans until the present day. At its core, white society is competitive and individualistic, fostering atomism of social bonds and an unnecessary concern for materialistic goals. Consequently, the white man would unwittingly seek to shape the Native American in his own image, thus destroying the natural harmony the Native American enjoyed with his fellow man and the environment. One of the most ingenious methods the white man used in its attempt to foist the farming system on the Native American was the allotment system stemming from the Dawes Act of 1887. What better way to achieve spiritualistic atomization, to isolate and destroy the Native American identity and harmony, than through individualized farming. Farming, in the white man's sense, was a sacrilege to many Native Americans.

You ask me to plow the ground. Shall I take a knife and bear my mother's breast? Then when I die she will not take me to her bosom to rest.

You ask me to dig for stone. Shall I dig under her skin for her bones? Then when I die I cannot enter her body to be born again.

You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it and be rich like white men. But how dare I cut off my mothers hair.[44]

Cultural Disintegration

The idea of assimilation was used on the native American throughout the post-treaty-making period which ended in 1871. When the values and life-styles of white people were assimilated by the Native American, his culture disintegrated. This from of cultural genoide is much more insidious than the rather obvious attempts made during the Allotment period, and it was hidden by a false sense of altruism.

> The white people who are trying to make us over into their image, they want us to be what they call assimilated, bringing the Indians into the mainstream and destroying our own way of life and our own cultural patterns. They believe that we should be contented to become like those whose concept of happiness is two cars and a color TV, a very materialistic and greedy society which is very different from our way.[45]

To disintegrate means to break down the harmony between the basic parts or elements of a unified whole or to disunite. For the Native American, cultural disintegration came as a result of being separated more and more from his natural environment and values. Every part of his life began to break down into disunited fragments. He began to live in a state of confusion, losing his identity and purpose in life. With physical and spiritual impairment, so came cultural impairment. Again, the native American was thrown out of balance with one more element of the Sacred Circle. This is witnessed in the poignant comments of Ben Black Elk, son of Sioux chief, Black Elk:

Our young people today . . . do not really know who they are or where they belong. So they have no pride. Today there are Indians who are ashamed they are Indians. Believe me, this is so . . .

We would like to be proud we are Indians, but . . . many schools for Indian children make them ashamed they are Indians. . . . The schools forget these are Indian children. They don't recognize them as Indians, but treat them as though they were white children. . . . This makes for failure, because it makes for confusion. And when the Indian culture is ignored, it makes our children ashamed they are Indians.[46]

Conclusion

Dispossessed native populations throughout the world follow a pattern that was exhibited by many Indian tribes throughout the North American continent during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The pattern is similar to the behavior of native peoples in Papau, New Guinea and Australia. Jacobs lists the three steps of native behavior as: (1) hospitality; (2) resentment growing with white takeover of the land; (3) warfare.[47] They are also similar in that the histories of the three groups have been written by explorers, missionaries, government agents, and settlers; and have been supplemented by anthropological studies.[48] The indigenous groups lived for centuries isolated from western or oriental civilization; were living in the Stone Age (with the exception of some American Indians who had copper); lived in clans, tribes, tribelets; used wooden and stone tools and weapons; had their own medical care; had clearly-defined roles for men and women; and lived in proximity to the land.

Europeans regarded these native populations in both the United States and Australia as nomadic. In point of fact, they had fixed boundaries for traveling, hunting and fishing, which were well-established with other tribes at the time of contact. The Turner thesis held that North America had a western frontier that needed to be explored and settled by immigrants and their descendants. This thesis has been a commonly accepted idea in United States history textbooks. Countless students have studied United States history through the writings of the frontier explorers who, it has been stated, have received a disproportionate place in the discipline of history as taught in the public schools.[49]

Throughout the contact period and continuing into the contemporary scene, the American Indian has retained a reverence for the land and all it contains. In a recent book, an Indian child tells of how she was taught to treat the land.

> My mother used to punish me. She would see me kicking the earth, or pulling up some bush, and she'd tell me to stop. . . . She said it was the way we were playing; she had been watching us, and we were digging in one place, then another, leaving ditches and holes, and not bothering to fix up what we'd done to the land after we were through.[50]

There are two remarkable facts about this comment made by the Hopi youth. The first is the fact that anyone would take such care of the land in the contemporary, industrialized United States which seems bent on covering the entire landscape with concrete and condominiums. The second is that after literally centuries of exploitation, the original inhabitants of the land would preserve this value, despite the odds.

The mother was teaching a value that the larger society ignores, but which was, and is, a vital part of the culture in the southwest part of the United States.

In another part of this same book the youth goes on to say what else she learned from her mother.

> She'd give us one of her lessons. She'd say that the most important thing in the world for us to know is that we are here to honor the land, not use it as if we bought it in a store.[51]

This is an aspect of the culture that Coles found to be characteristic of the Indians and Eskimos with whom he came in contact. This is, they retain a tie to the land that pre-dates environmental reaction to the ruining of America's land. "They retain from their ancestors an awe of the land, a constant regard for it, an inclination to find in it a kind of ultimate reassurance that others might describe as 'religious'."[52]

This is also true of the Alaskan Native. The Alaskan has been isolated geographically and has had a buffer from the exploitation of developers until recently. At least they were protected from the type of exploitation brought on by the Alaska Pipeline of the 1970s.

> No Eskimo child, however isolated his or her village, is immune to the tension generated by Alaska's fast changing social and economic climate, not to mention the arctic climate, which so far has not changed at all.[53]

While the Alaskan Native is being buffeted by the drive for more resources (namely, oil), children are continuing to be taught to respect the land, as are the Indians of the "lower forty-eight" states. Coles states that Eskimo children ". . . Have a strong attachment to the land in and near their village, and are quick to identify outsiders by reference to that land--people who were born elsewhere and have lived elsewhere."[54]

American Indians and Alaskan Natives have survived. At least some of the tribes and some of the villages are testimony to the strength of their culture, or the providence of a higher being. There is such a thing as "contra-acculturation." This term used by Elkin provides hope for the survivors of the breaking of the Sacred Circle. This takes place when the culture physically survives the contact with alien cultures, and revives

its culture in a modified form. An example was Handsome Lake of the Senecas. Jacobs states that it took the Senecas 200 years to revive their culture in a modified form. It has been suggested that if a culture survives and creates a modified form, the culture will survive. Handsome Lake provided the impetus for the revival of the Seneca culture.

The 1799 vision of Handsome Lake was a new beginning--"A renaissance in Iroquois technology, a rehabilitation of the Iroquiois cultural health, and the beginning of the Longhouse or Handsome Lake Church."[55]

This chapter has intended to set forth the impact of intrusion on the people of North America, as chronicled in the speeches and statements of Indian leaders who were attempting to establish a link with the over 890,000 Native Americans living in the United States. Regarding the initial contact, such a noted historian as Jacobs had difficulty believing what impact the intrusion has on the native populace until he investigated the issue for himself. He stated, "The original development of America's native population was disrupted by the intrusion of European colonizers. The entire history of embattled America is one of unheard of violence and treachery, of mass destruction of native peoples and their enslavement." He had read of the destruction of American Indians in a Soviet Union encyclopedia and had not believed it; but finally concluded, "Yet further study of Indian history (and of the writings of others who have studied the subject) has convinced me that there is, unfortunately, much truth in the Soviet encyclopedia account . . . ."[56]

The record of treatment of the American Indian and the Alaskan Native is difficult to believe, and there is a tendency toward the perception that the same thing could not be repeated. However, one must be cautious about such an opinion.

If we condemn the white man in his relations with the Indians and Australian aborigines, let us be aware that the example of history shows the same kind of abominations can occur again if the stakes are high enough. A case in point is the policy of the United States in protecting oil, mineral and land rights of the Alaskan Indians and Eskimos.[57]

DEFINE

CULTURAL:

PHYSICAL:

SPIRITUAL:

CIRCLE:

INTRUSION:

HARMONY:

LINEAR:

ABORIGINAL:

CONCOMITANT:

RESERVATION:

ALLOT:

ATOMISTIC:

ACQUISITION:

EXPLOITATION:

JUSTIFICATION:

CHIMERA:

DISINTEGRATE:

VALUES:

OPPRESSION:

SOCIETY:

METAPHYSICAL:

CITIZENSHIP:

GENOCIDE:

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What does the author mean by reference to the Sacred Circle of American Indians and Alaskan Natives?

2. What is an Indian reservation?

3. What is meant by alloting land?

4. How many American Indians were there at the time of contact?

5. What were Indian impressions of non-Indian schools?

6. When did the intrusion process begin to impact Alaskan Natives?

7. Why was the loss of land so important to the American Indian?

8. Describe how missionaries impacted the lives of American Indians.

9. Why was the missionary message confusing to the Native Americans?

10. In what year did American Indians become citizens of the United States?

11. Are American Indians attempting to rebuild their reservations? What do you think they should do?

12. What is assimilation and how does the concept apply to the American Indian?

13. What pattern do indigenous people follow when they come in contact with more dominant societies?

Footnotes

1. "Voices from Wounded Knee," Akwesasne Notes, Roosevelt Town, p. 246.

2. John Fire and Richard Erdoes, Lame Deer: Seeker of Visions, pp. 100-101.

3. John G. Neihart, Black Elk Speaks, pp.146-166.

4. Neihart, Lame Deer, pp. 164-166.

5. Rupert Costo and Jeannette Henry, Indian Treaties: Two Centuries of Dishonor, p. 220.

6. Neihart, Lame Deer, p. 6.

7. Wilbur R. Jacobs, Dispossessing the American Indian, p. 136.

8. T. C. McLuhan, Touch the Earth, p. 99.

9. McLuhan, Touch the Earth, p. 106.

10. Fire and Erdoes, Lame Deer, p. 146.

11. Stan Steiner and Shirley Hill Witt, The Way, pp. 28-29.

12. Indian Affairs Task Force, State of Washington, Are You Listening Neighbor, pp. 5-8.

13. See Note 12.

14. Vine Deloria, God Is Red, p. 73.

15. Jacobs, Dispossessing, p. 126.

16. Jacobs, Dispossessing, p. 127.

17. McLuhan, Touch the Earth, p. 69.

18. McLuhan, Touch the Earth, p. 67.

19. McLuhan, Touch the Earth, p. 148.

20. Jacobs, Dispossessing, p. 127.

21. Same as note 20.

Unit 1 Footnotes

22. Deloria, God Is Red, pp. 105-106.

23. McLuhan, Touch the Earth, p. 63.

24. Same as note 23.

25. Costo and Henry, Indian Treaties, p. xviii.

26. Steiner and Witt, The Way, p. 5.

27. Same as note 26.

28. Fire and Erdoes, Lame Deer, p. 33.

29. McLuhan, Touch the Earth, p. 15.

30. "Voices from Wounded Knee," p. 246.

31. McLuhan, Touch the Earth, p. 136.

32. Same as note 31.

33. Dee Brown, Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, p. 333.

34. Steiner and Witt, The Way, p. 167.

35. Steiner and Witt, The Way, p. 17.

36. Steiner and Witt, The Way, p. 6.

37. Fire and Erdoes, Lame Deer, pp. 58-59.

38. Margot Astruou, American Indian Prose and Poetry: An Anthology, p. 140.

39. McLuhan, Touch the Earth, p. 90.

40. McLuhan, Touch the Earth, pp. 123-124.

41. Virginia I. Armstrong, I Have Spoken: American History Through the Voices of the Indians, p. 150.

42. Vine Deloria, Custer Died for Your Sins, pp. 52-53.

43. Deloria, Custer Died, pp. 52-53.

44. McLuhan, Touch the Earth, p. 56.

Unit 1 Footnotes

45. Armstrong, I Have Spoken, p. 161.

46. Armstrong, I Have Spoken, p. 158.

47. Jacobs, Dispossessing, p. 128.

48. Same as note 47.

49. Silberman, Charles E., Crisis in the Classroom.

50. Robert Coles, Eskimos, Chicanos, Indians, pp. 402-403.

51. Coles, Eskimos, p. 499.

52. Sames as note 51.

53. Coles, Eskimos, p. 188.

54. Coles, Eskimos, p. 200.

55. Jacobs, Dispossessing, p. 108.

56. Jacobs, Dispossessing, p. 150.

57. James J. Benedetto, "Alaska Natives Seek to Amend Claims Settlement Act," Winds of Change, Vol. 2, No. 3, (September 1987), pp. 11-13.

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